

Town of Lincoln

Budget Board Meeting

November 19, 2009

Present:

Linda Noble Carl Brunetti Greg Leonard Cheryl Ethier Sheila Chisholm

Claudette Lussier John Picozzi Jay O'Grady Hagop Jawharjian Joe Renning

Absent:

Bob Ericson

The meeting began at 7:35 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of October 22, 2009 were distributed for review.

Cheryl Ethier made a motion, seconded by Greg Leonard, to approve the minutes.

The minutes were accepted by a vote of 9-0 with Jay O'Grady abstaining because he was not present on October 22.

In correspondence, copies of the sections of the Town of Lincoln charter that pertain to the Budget Board were distributed so that they could be reviewed and any necessary revisions could be made during the upcoming charter review.

Jay O'Grady will represent the Budget Board on the Charter Review

Committee.

There was discussion of the public hearing and when it should be held according to the charter, since currently it is held before the Budget Board has time to review the budget and make recommendations.

It was noted that there could also be additional public hearings, closer to the Financial Town Meeting, in order to make the public familiar with the Budget Board's recommendations.

Also the format of the budget was discussed, such as adding information about capital expenditure allotments and what has been spent against them so far. It was noted that no charter amendment is necessary to add an informational piece to the budget.

Some wording changes to the existing charter were discussed.

In other correspondence, emails between the Town Administrator and the School Department regarding the possibilities of an All-Day Kindergarten program and the closing of the Fairlawn Early Learning Center were discussed.

The meeting was opened to Public Comment and Questions, however at the time there were none.

In Old Business, the cost differences associated with an All-Day

Kindergarten program and the closing of the Fairlawn Early Learning Center were discussed.

It was noted that savings of up to \$500,000 would materialize due to the closing of the Early Learning Center because of lower maintenance costs, and with the All-Day Kindergarten program there could be savings of up to \$125,000 due to the rerouting of buses.

It was noted changing the school system so that all schools had Grades K-5 would mean a town-wide redistricting.

Greg Leonard thought that it was important that the Budget Board be able to review information that showed that All-Day Kindergarten would be beneficial versus the costs and that it wouldn't be just the same curriculum they currently use spread out over a full day.

It was noted that the Budget Board has put in requests for information on enrollment from the Superintendent and the Commissioner of Education because previous information did not match information provided by the RI Department of Education.

It was noted that the Town Solicitor's interpretation seems to differ from the RI Department of Education regarding maintenance of effort and also using Medicaid reimbursement as a revenue stream.

The Budget Board was interested in getting an opinion from the Auditor General's office regarding these issues.

The Budget Board discussed the Municipal Budget, and more specifically Twin River revenues now that are open 24-hours and

where those extra revenues will be applied.

In New Business, the Budget Board discussed their Meeting Schedule.

In review of monthly reports received, the Budget Board noticed that the capital resolution for the schools was overspent by about \$213,000 and they wanted to know where the funded for the additional capital expenditures came from.

In particular, they question the High School Music Room which was budgeted for \$45,000 but expended at \$120,000.

Discussion ensued about whether the schools need to get special permission to spend funds from the capital reserve account.

There will be stimulus funds to pay for a planetarium at the Middle School, which the Budget Board had questions about such as: does the school have a room available to devote to that program, what happens when the stimulus money no longer pays for it, and how will it be converted?

The Budget Board also had questions about funding for the new Mandarin program which includes trips to China for some school administrators to get it started.

The meeting was again opened to Public Comment and Questions, and there were none at the time.

Hagop Jawharjian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jay O'Grady.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.